

A Man with a Rake

Ted Kooser

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We can convince ourselves that we know Midwestern soil, a stream bank, the stillness of a cedar fence post, but Ted Kooser shows otherwise in this collection of eighteen poems, his fifteenth collection. He is a Pulitzer Prize winner, two-time US Poet Laureate, and, with his wife, Kathleen Rutledge, the caretaker of sixty-two acres of unmeddled-with Nebraskan countryside.

A FOX

For Dan Gerber

*I saw a red fox stepping in and out
of the shadows of tall granite stones
in a cemetery's oldest section, fur
flaring as she entered each patch
of sun, though her feet and the tip
of her tail were too darkened by dew
to be set alight. She was quite small
but in her presence the stones forgot
their names. Above her the canopy
was respectfully opening oak by oak
to light her way, though she offered
no sign that she expected any less.
I couldn't move for fear she'd stop
and fix me with those eyes that had
already stopped everything there,
the headstones, the plastic flowers,
I, too, now breathless as I watched
her pass along that long, long hall,
a flame reflected in its many doors.*

MATT SUTHERLAND (March / April 2022)

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